

Agricultural Marketing Service
Office of the Deputy Administrator, Marketing Programs
Dairy Division
Dairy Grading Branch
Office of the Chief
National Field Office
GS-1980-9
Agricultural Commodity Grader (Dairy)

SJ 297

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Field Office is responsible for administering the nationwide inspection and grading of nonfat dry milk, cheese, butter and other dairy and related products at terminal markets, shipping points, assembling and packaging plants, and inspection of dairy processing, packaging and manufacturing plant facilities and equipment.

The incumbent serves as an Agricultural Commodity Grader responsible primarily for conducting plant survey inspections of dairy processing plants by evaluating plant premises, equipment, operations and products to determine compliance with official specifications/requirements and eligibility for official plant approval status. The incumbent may also perform grading and inspection of dairy food products.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Plant Inspection Activities (minimum 25% of work time)

Conducts a methodical check and evaluation of facilities, processing equipment, processing and packaging methods, sanitation procedures, and quality improvement program at dairy plants from beginning to end of the processing/production cycle.

Prepares detailed inspection reports covering a large number of carefully examined items in each inspection to determine plant compliance with the specifications and overall program requirements. (This plant survey report forms the basis for assigning eligibility for official plant approval status.)

Meets with plant management to explain plant evaluation findings and makes recommendations for correction of conditions that are not in compliance with specifications and to improve quality and stability of raw materials and finished products. Conducts follow-up visits, as required, to monitor and assess problem areas at specific plant locations and to assure ongoing eligibility of plants to produce approved product.

Grading/Inspection Activities

Selects representative samples of product for test weighing and for container and product quality examination, and prepares samples for transmittal to designated laboratory for chemical and bacteriological analysis. Applies specifications to condition of containers and determines type and degree of defects and the need for selection and variance of the sampling plans.

Checks accuracy of scales for weighing and establishes an accurate tare weight of packaging material; weighs samples of product, recording the weights, and computes and certifies the tare and net weight for the lot tested.

Applies and interprets official standards, contract specifications, and instructions in the inspection or grading of butter, cheese, dry milk and other dairy or related products according to the degree and intensity of such factors as flavor, body, texture, color, finish and appearance, as well as other factors described above. Determines the final U.S. Grade according to official Grade Standards for each lot and unit thereof, and prepares graders' memoranda, sampling reports and/or official certificates for product inspected or graded.

As required, inspects product at time of loading in order to identify the commodity as that which was previously inspected and found to meet quality requirements of the contract or specification; examines the lot at time of loading for condition of containers and for compliance with labeling and case marking requirements; ascertains and records number of cases per car or truck; seals or supervises sealing of loaded cars or trucks; and performs any other examination necessary to determine compliance with the applicable inspection request specifications or contract. As assigned, performs check grading and participates in appeal gradings of dairy plants and products.

Adheres to Civil Rights policies, goals and objectives in performing the duties of this position. Assures that oral and written communications are bias-free and that differences of other employees and clients are respected and valued.

III. FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position Level 1-6 950 pts.

Knowledge of the official grade standards, regulations, and characteristics, factors, and conditions to grade and inspect the full range of dairy and other related products.

Thorough knowledge of a variety of dairy processing and packaging methods and procedures, plant facilities, equipment, sanitary procedures, etc., in order to conduct plant surveys and advise plant management regarding improvement in required areas.

Knowledge of techniques and procedures to compute tare weights, take representative samples, and inspect loading of products. Thorough skill and ability in grading products, inspecting facilities, and maintaining proper relationships with industry personnel.

2. Supervisory Controls Level 2-3 275 pts.

The supervisor makes the assignments and provides general coordination of the work. The employee independently performs the procedures required by the specific assignment, resolving nearly all technical problems independently, including issuing certificates, explaining to plant management results of plant surveys, and recommending corrective action. The supervisor performs general on-the-spot review of grading and inspection work and occasionally performs survey work jointly with the incumbent as a form of review.

3. Guidelines Level 3-3 275 pts.

The guides consist of the official grade standards for dairy products; the regulations pertaining to plant requirements for sanitation and processing; the instructional manuals for grading and conducting inspections; supplemental written and oral instructions; contract or purchase specifications; agency instructions on methods and practices used in shipping, packaging and storing dairy products; and General Specifications for dairy plants approved for USDA inspection and grading service.

The employee independently selects and applies the appropriate guides to a variety of situations and is required to use extensive judgment in interpretation of the standards and regulations in such cases as independently making borderline grade determinations; independently explaining or advising industry management on USDA requirements or policies as they apply in ambiguous situations; and performing methodical evaluations of overall plant activity.

4. Complexity Level 4-3 150 pts.

The work consists of grading and inspecting dairy and other related products, and inspecting equipment, sanitation, storage and processing conditions, etc. Performance of the work requires considering different factors and applying different procedures according to the specific product or phase of work being performed. The duties require evaluation of technically complex processing equipment.

5. Scope and Effect Level 5-3 150 pts.

The work involves applying US Standards and Federal specifications to determine the grade or acceptability of dairy and other related products as well as evaluating the plant for eligibility for official approval. The certificates issued and outcome of the plant surveys directly affect the financial interests of both buyers and sellers of dairy products.

6. Personal Contacts Level 6-2 25 pts.

Contacts include the employees and managers of dairy processing and distribution firms as well as other Agricultural Commodity Graders.

7. Purpose of Contacts Level 7-3 120 pts.

The purpose is to develop and maintain the cooperation of plant management and industry employees and resolve conflicts; to explain grade determinations, plant evaluations, and related agency policies and regulations; and to advise on or exchange information related to technical matters.

8. Physical Demands Level 8-3 50 pts.

Commodity grading work requires periods of physical exertion to lift and move boxes and cartons of product often weighing over 50 pounds; prolonged periods of standing, walking, stooping, bending, and climbing; physical coordination and finger dexterity in both hands to perform digital examinations of commodities; ability to detect abnormalities in the commodity through normal or corrected vision in at least one eye for distance, depth perception, and color, the ability to assure safety in a highly mechanized and/or noisy environment through adequate or correctable hearing; and the ability to determine product quality through sensory perception (taste, smell, etc.)

9. Work Environment Level 9-2 20 pts.

The work environment includes exposure to freezing temperatures, slippery surfaces, moving materials, handling equipment, and similar risks typical of dairy processing plants and storage areas.

TOTAL POINTS = 2015 = GS-9